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Stark County Law Library Association

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BEGINNERS

www.Versuslaw.com

**The email address,
info@starklaw
library.org really
works! TRY IT!!**

Are you a solo or an attorney in a small firm who can't afford Lexis or Westlaw? Try [Versuslaw](http://www.Versuslaw.com)!

Versuslaw is sometimes referred to as one of the "bottom feeders" who, it is believed by some, can not hold a candle to Lexis and Westlaw.

But Versuslaw, which ranges in price from \$12 - \$35 /month, is too cheap *not* to have! They offer a complete statute library and include many of the harder to find federal district court decisions.

Versuslaw is so inexpensive that at least one legal malpractice insurer includes it as a perk of coverage. That means more revenues for Versuslaw which can be applied to further build up its casefiles. No doubt the other bottom feeders also have plans to expand their databases - which is becoming increasingly less expensive as more and more courts release cases online. When the day comes that the bottom feeders can offer full database service for less, Lexis had better watch out - because lawyers like me will remember its obnoxious practices.¹

Versuslaw's Standard Plan at \$11.95/mo; \$143.40/yr., offers online access to archive and current opinions from the following courts: U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, Federal District Courts (current only), State Appellate Court, Tribal Courts, and Foreign Courts, plus a subscription to AdvanceLinks.

The Premium Plan at \$19.95/mo; \$239.40/yr. builds on the case law access of the Standard Plan, plus access to archive and current Federal District Court opinions and selected state content such as statutes and regulations. This plan also offers additional search capabilities and add-on products including access to Standard Plan Case Law, both archive and current, Federal District Court opinions, selected state statutes and regs, other state content, increased search engine functionality, and a citation search feature.

Both Standard and Premium Plan users may also subscribe to the U.S. Code and the Code of Federal Regulations.

The Professional Plan at \$34.95/mo. or \$419.40/yr. includes the online case law access, additional state content and online search capabilities of the Premium Plan. Also included is access to the U.S. Code, CFR and selected special practice collections, access to premium plan case law search capabilities and additional state content.²

Safe, effective use of personalized search requires consumers to use common sense.⁵

INTERMEDIATE

Customize Your Searching

The personalization of search results is one of the most important aspects of the search engine business.

Web researchers face a common dilemma -- privacy or a personalized interface? "How much information do I want to disclose to a third party in order to be able to have a customized interface, stored searches, and a pre-configured profile?"³

A9, the new search tool developed by Amazon.com and powered by Google is a good example of this dilemma. The A9 toolbar also enables you to annotate a web page, and will display your notes whenever you return to that page. (For a review of A9, see the April 21, 2004 issue of SearchDay, at <<http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3342881>>).

Unlike many search engines, A9 will store your searches -- provided that you have registered with Amazon.com and have your cookies enabled. If you need to re-run your search, just click the link to that search, and it is executed again.

If you choose privacy instead of stored histories, use the generic version available at <<http://generic.A9.com>>, which has disabled the personalization features.

Google's toolbar also comes in two versions, the stripped-down, "I'm into privacy" version and the

"whistles and bells" version for the brave at heart.

Most of the major search engines offer some degree of personalization and, since most do not identify you with your prior searches, issues related to privacy become less worrisome. The following are a few of the customization and personalization options that are particularly valuable for power searchers.

- A regular Google search <<http://www.google.com/preferences>> will allow you to change the number of results displayed per page to 100 instead of 10 and change the default to opening search results in a new window in order to hold your search results in a separate browser window.
- MSN <<http://search.msn.com/preferences.aspx>>, Teoma <<http://s.teoma.com/Prefs>>, Ask Jeeves <<http://web.ask.com/webprefs>>, and HotBot <http://www.hotbot.com/prefs_results.asp> all offer these options as well.
- Yahoo <<http://search.yahoo.com/search/preferences>>, provides for these same options, but offers a less-cluttered search interface at <<http://search.yahoo.com>>. The tabs that indicate what type of search you want -- web, images, news, and so on, can also be altered.⁴



ADVANCED

Cut the Spam

Spam is an inevitable by-product of the computer revolution, but the Center for Democracy and Technology has some advice on reducing spam. The center created dozens of e-mail addresses, used each in a different scenario, then watched each to see which produced the most spam. They found that

the e-mail addresses that received almost all—a whopping 97 percent—of the thousands of pieces of spam that came in were those posted on Web pages. Addresses that had been used only to register at e-commerce sites, for example, received little or no spam. (To read the full report, go to <http://www.cdt.org/speech/spam/030319spamreport.shtml>.)⁶

Although now illegal as a result of the CAN-SPAM Act, spammers are still using harvesters (high-speed programs that collect visible e-mail addresses from websites and add them to spam mailing lists). Since we all want our e-mail addresses to be prominently displayed on our websites, we need to take the following precautions to cut down the likelihood of becoming a "harvester victim."

- **Alter the form of your address.** Instead of `nancy@starklawlibrary.org`, use `nancy at stark law library dot org`. People know how to use the information and the harvester doesn't - not yet anyway!!

- **Display your address as a graphic.** This one really foils the harvester and will continue to do so for a long time because of the amount of time it would take to add searching all the graphics on the web to its job!
- **Alter your HTML code.** If you use an e-mail link on your website DON'T use plain text in the code.

For example,

```
"example@domain.
com" could be
written"&#101;
&#120;&#097;
&#109;&#112;
&#108;&#101;
&#064;&#100;
&#111;&#109;
&#097;&#105;
&#110;&#046;
&#099;&#111;
&#109;".7
```

- **Use a filter.** Filtering software is readily available and very good. Many ISPs also provide free spam filtering. While filters are not perfect, they can cut down tremendously the amount of spam a user receives. The downside of relying primarily on filters is the "in between," the e-mails that the filter is not sure of being spam are deposited in a special file that you DO need to check periodically because important e-mail does inadvertently go there!

By Nancy Stinson, MLS
nancy@starklawlibrary.org

FOOTNOTES



- ¹ Elefant, Carolyn. "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Bottom Feeders? LEXIS President Lou Andreozzi Is, and Here's Why," MyShingle.com. 8 May 2004. <<http://myshingle.com/article.pl?sid=04/05/08/2358255&mode=thread>>.
- ² "VersusLaw Legal Research - Products and Services." VersusLaw. 2000 - 2004. VersusLaw. Inc. 18 June 2004. <<http://www.versuslaw.com/products/all.asp>>.
- ³ & ⁴ Bates, Mary Ellen. "May 2004: Let's Get Personal." Bates Information Services. 2004. Bates Information Services, Inc. 18 June 2004. <<http://www.batesinfo.com/tip.html>>.
- ⁵ Johnson, Steve. "Privacy Tradeoffs and the Search Wars." Cnet news.com. 11 June 2004. CNET Networks, Inc. 23 June 2004. <<http://news.com.com/2010-1023-5228212.html>>.
- ⁶ Livingston, Brian. "Protect Your E-mail Address." PC Magazine. 22 June 2004. Ziff Davis Publishing Holdings Inc. 22 June 2004. <<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1601565,00.asp>>
- ⁷ "Why Am I Getting All This Spam? Unsolicited Commercial E-mail Research Six Month Report." March 2003. Center for Democracy and Technology. 22 June 2004. <<http://www.cdt.org/speech/spam/030319spamreport.shtml>>.